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A TALE OF THE WAR OF 1757.

INTRODUCTORY.

For years before the date of our story, the English and French colonists in America had made war upon one another. The causes of these incessant wars were numerous—sometimes the dispute was about territory, sometimes about the fur trade, while not unfrequently some intrigue concerning the redmen of the forest brought the two nations to blows. In these wars the colonists were assisted by trained armies from the mother countries; and the most experienced European generals were sent to command them.

Such was Braddock on the one hand, and Dieskau on the other; both of whom, although most successful traders at home, failed entirely in the American wilderness, owing to the wide difference in the mode of warfare, a difference which they could not see, and for which they accordingly made no allowance. Probably no part of the country was so often the scene of encounters between the hostile troops, as the valley of the beautiful Lake Champlain; its unrivalled water communication made it the natural highway for the predatory Indian bands with their fleets of swift and light canoes, while the more disciplined whites often met in battle upon the borders of the lakes. Numerous forts had been erected upon the shores of Lakes Champlain and George, and it is around two of these, namely, Forts William Henry and Edward, that most of the incidents which are related in our story took place.

Fort William Henry was situated at the lower extremity of Lake George, the waters of which were celebrated for their clearness; this lake was named the Horicon by Cooper the novelist. Fort Edward was situated further south on the river Hudson. Both these posts were well garrisoned in the spring of 1757, the former by Colonel Munro, who had under his command the 60th Rifles, or Royal Americans, and some militia; the latter by General Webb and about 5,000 troops. During the previous year the French had gained many advantages, under the Marquis of Montcalm, whose name afterwards became so well-known in connection with the siege of Quebec by Wolfe. This short sketch will give the reader some idea of the state of the country when our story opens.

CHAPTER I.

It was a beautiful spring day, the earth had escaped the icy bonds of a long winter, and awakened to new life and vigour. Already the leaves were commencing to appear upon the trees, flowers were sending forth their tender buds, and nature arraying herself in her brightest colours. In the drawing-room of one of the principal houses of the town of Albany reclined on a sofa a beautiful girl of some eighteen summers. The countenance of Florence Temple, for such was her name, was one of a type rarely seen, as remarkable for the regularity of its features, as for the loveliness of their expression; her complexion was dark, but into its darkness a rich colour seemed to diffuse itself. Her hair, black as the raven's wing, flowed in luxuriance over her finely-proportioned shoulders, while her mouth was small and beautifully formed, and whenever a smile was elicited by the book she was reading, disclosed exquisitely white teeth; and what lovely eyes were hers! They are none of your flashing eyes, which seem to look down upon mankind in scorn; though dark, they only shone with innocence and love. While perusing the volume before her, a knock was heard at the door, followed by the entrance of a man servant. Florence noticed with surprise that the servant's face wore a discontented look, an occurrence which with the good-natured Irishman rarely happened.

"Well, Patrick, what is the matter with you?"

"Plase, Miss Flory, there's nothing's the matter with me, but that young gintleman as is so often coming to see you is down stairs, and wants to know if you are at home. And mighty impatient he was when I tould him I thought you would not see any one to-day. He tould me I might spare myself the trouble of thinking about it, and desired me to give you his name, and ax ye to see him."

"Well, Patrick, you may shew him up, as he particularly wishes to see me."

"Oh bedad, I'm shure he does, just that same; and small blame to him, and who wouldn't that had ever set eyes on the light of your beautiful countenance?"

As the young gentleman was ushered into the apartment, the most careless observer might have noticed that the eyes of the young maiden wore a pleased and happy expression, which soon changed to one of deep sadness when informed of the special object of his visit. The young couple had for some weeks been affianced. Edwin Herbert, with whom Florence was now conversing, was the son of

an eminent lawyer of the same town, between whom and Judge Temple, Florence's father, had existed a fast friendship from their earliest days of childhood; and the attachment between their children had been favourably looked upon by both parents. At an early age Florence had been left motherless, and had thus become to her bereaved father's heart its sole consolation, at once his greatest care and joy. Edwin Herbert was in stature slightly above the medium height. His form was well proportioned, and gave indication of great muscular strength and activity; he would not have been accounted handsome were it not for a high and intellectual forehead, and eyes whose expression shewed more than ordinary brightness and vivacity. His complexion was naturally fair, but had been finely bronzed by exposure to the weather. His hands and feet were small and well formed, and his whole manner bespoke the well-bred gentleman. Edwin had now called to apprise Florence of the unexpected events of the morning. At a meeting of the citizens of Albany, held for the purpose of considering how they could best aid the regular troops, leaving for the seat of war, it had been resolved to raise a company of volunteers, whom Edwin's father had promised to equip, and of which the citizens proposed giving Edwin the command. In one short month they were to take the field, and then Edwin, in obedience to duty's call, would be inevitably parted from his loved Florence, and to impart this intelligence to her was now his painful task. Florence knew well the dangers which Edwin would have to encounter both from the French and Indian foe, and her heart sunk within her as she contemplated their fast approaching separation. Struggling, however, to maintain an appearance of calmness she was far from feeling, she warmly expressed her sympathy for the noble cause in which her lover had enlisted in defence of home and country. The hours flew swiftly by while the lovers sat in happy converse, and evening was far advanced ere Edwin could bring himself to leave his fair betrothed. Too soon that peaceful month had passed, and the lovers were at last compelled to say adieu. Their farewell interview over, Edwin repaired to where his soldiers were assembled; who, before the day was much farther spent, were destined to commence their march to the distant seat of war. The duty of attending to his soldiers' wants, and the needful preparations for so long a journey, now fully occupied Edwin; but ever and anon saddening thoughts of his recent parting from his betrothed would return, and it was with difficulty he concealed his emotion on seeing her unexpectedly appear on horseback, accompanied by her father, amongst the crowd of those who had gathered to witness their departure.

All is now ready, and amidst the cheers of those who had assembled to look, perhaps for the last time, on those brave and patriotic men, the company commenced its march towards the seat of war. Edwin's last looks were directed towards a slight figure on horseback, who seemed graciously waving encouragement and adieu.

CHAPTER II.

The reader must now accompany us to the shores of Lake George, so named in honour of His Majesty George the Second.

The first rays of the sun had scarcely made surrounding objects discernable when a canoe was seen, evidently guided by no unskilful hand, making its way towards the land. It had no sooner grated upon the beach than its occupant, a powerful and athletic man, jumped ashore.

After carefully concealing the canoe in the nearest brushwood, he commenced making his way into the woods. Arrived at the first cleared space, he bent his long rifle, which he had till now carried on his shoulder, against a tree, and stooping to the earth placed his ear to the ground; in this posture he remained about five minutes, listening intently. He then slowly rose to his feet, and while doing so began soliloquizing:

"General Webb tould me they would follow the right bank, and I am quite certain they cannot have passed me; the only thing for me to do now I suppose is to exercise patience, as the parson tould us at the fort."

Suiting the action to the word, the late occupant of the canoe sat down as if with the intention of making a lengthened stay. Before doing so, however, he looked around as if to assure himself that no lurking enemy was near. Long experience as a forrester no doubt made him thus cautious.

Two hours had passed, when the quick ears of the scout enabled him to detect a noise as of men on the march. The sounds gradually became more and more distinct.

"It must be them," he said, "but I cannot be too careful; so I will just climb this tree until I have made certain."

The scout had scarcely effected his object, when several men entered the glade; they were quickly followed by others, until the number amounted to about one hundred.

As soon as the scout saw their uniform and heard their captain address a few words to them, all doubt seemed banished from his mind. Letting himself to the ground, he ad-

vanced with perfect confidence towards their leader. As he came into sight exclamations of wonder and surprise escaped from some of those before him, and not a few rifles were menacingly raised at his person; but on a word from their leader all hostile demonstrations ceased.

"Who are you, who thus so strangely present yourself before us?" asked Captain Herbert, who, as our readers may have surmised, was the commander of the party.

"I am known by the name of Lightfoot, and have been sent by General Webb from Fort Edward to guide a company of volunteers by the nearest and safest road to that post; from what the general said, yours must be the company he meant."

"No doubt, Lightfoot, we are the company for whom you have been waiting, but before entrusting ourselves to your guidance, it will be necessary for you to furnish evidence of your being thus authorized."

"Lightfoot does not often hear what he says doubted, but General Webb tould me that in case I was not believed to show this letter."

Edwin took the missive from the scout's hands, the contents of which were:

FORT EDWARD, June 4, 1757.

The commander of the company lately raised by the citizens of Albany will accept of the scout Lightfoot as a guide to Fort Edward. He may be perfectly trusted, as he has faithfully served the British cause from the commencement of the war.

In haste,

WEBB.

As soon as Captain Herbert had read the letter, he grasped the hand of the scout and said:

"Forgive me if for a moment I doubted the truth of your assertion, but in the war at present being carried on, I have heard that one can never exercise too much caution."

"What you say, captain, is true, and I think it would be better for you, instead of marching your men in one body, to send one or two in front to feel the way, and report any danger which might be ahead."

"Your advice is good, and when we resume our march I shall act upon it; in the meantime the men are both hungry and tired, and as this is a suitable place, we shall remain here for breakfast."

Smoke was soon seen to rise from several fires which the soldiers had kindled, and with such fare as they had they managed to make a hearty meal.

As soon as the party were sufficiently rested orders were given to continue their march; it was not long before they were started again, and the spot where they had halted was soon left far behind. Could any of them have seen what was now taking place within its limits, it would not have given them any desire for straggling from their ranks.

Scarcely had the last of the soldiers left the glade before a dark and malignant face might have been seen cautiously peering through the bushes, and apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, the Indian, for such he was, stepped fearlessly among the fires, where the soldiers had been taking their meal. After again looking around, he imitated the screech of an owl three times. The signal was soon answered. Four dusky warriors like himself emerged from the surrounding woods, all armed and bedaubed with war paint; the first to speak was the one who had signalled to the others.

"Redhand sees that the pale-face warriors are careless; they light fires to tell their enemies where to find their scalps. If Redhand had some more of his warriors here, he would soon cause the enemies of his French father to sing their death song; now, however, Redhand is afraid his warriors will have to return without scalps, as the enemy are too many, and the great scout Lightfoot is among them."

As soon as Redhand had ceased speaking, one of his warriors, remarkable for his sinewy frame, angrily stepped forward and commenced to speak against returning.

"Does Redhand think that Greywolf left his wigwam by the great lakes to look at his enemies without fighting them? No, if Redhand likes to go back to the Onondaga women without scalps, Greywolf will not; he has already barked, he will now show his enemies he can bite."

"Greywolf has spoken like a great warrior, but he is hasty because he is young, and cannot yet show many scalps; if he wants to stay behind he can, but Redhand and the rest of his warriors will go to the north. Redhand has finished."

In accordance with his words, the chief and his warriors, taking a line to the right of the glade, soon disappeared. But Greywolf, the warrior who had spoken against returning, remained behind for a few moments till the other Indians were lost to view; he then proceeded at a sharp run immediately on the track of the column.

CHAPTER III.

TAKING the advice which the scout had given him, Captain Herbert sent several of his men at different distances in advance of his column. Thus they journeyed on for several days without anything unusual happening.

One day, however, this monotony was varied by a frightful occurrence. The men were marching along in the best of spirits, when they suddenly spied not far distant from them, one of their advanced guard. He was sitting with his back to them on the trunk of a decayed tree, his head was drooping between his hands, and he appeared to them as one in deep thought. Surprised at this, for the man should have been at least half a mile in front of them, Captain Herbert advanced towards him with the intention of chiding him for his disobedience to orders, and touching him on the shoulder he was surprised to find that he still remained motionless and silent, his cap rolled off, however, and revealed to Edwin's horror a bleeding skull. The man had evidently been killed by a treacherous blow from behind, and his diabolical enemy had completed his fiendish work by scalping him, and then mockingly arranged the dead man so that until his companions were close upon him they would believe him alive. That it was the work of an Indian was undoubted, and soon they were enabled to tell to what tribe he belonged, for Lightfoot after long and attentive consideration, said:

"An Onondaga has done this, I can tell from the print his moccasin has left."

Our readers know that the scout was right. They also must have guessed that it was Greywolf's work, and so it was. For days he had watched for a favourable opportunity, and at last he saw one of the soldiers more careless than the rest, seat himself unsuspectingly upon a fallen tree; from his attitude Greywolf also noticed that the man was tired; he had therefore crept noiselessly upon the weary soldier, and with one blow from his tomahawk had killed him. The man did not utter a sound, so sudden had been the blow, but a convulsive tremor shook his frame, and then all was still. Greywolf had then arranged the dead man in the position in which he had been found by his companions. As he did so, he muttered:

"The soldiers will no long laugh when they see this," he then quickly left the scene.

As soon as the men had recovered from the horror which the terrible fate of their comrade inspired, deep threats of vengeance resounded on all sides.

To be continued.

OLD REES.

I LEFT L. y. d. n. in a diligence, one fine summer morning, in order to spend the vacation at my uncle's country-seat. When we stopped at the town which was my destination, I heard a weak shrill voice ask the first passenger who got down whether he was Mr. Wilbraham.

A rough reply in the negative was returned. "Can he be in this coach?" rejoined the voice.

"Yes, here I am!" said I, springing out, and confronting the speaker.

He was a little man, with high shoulders and stiff knees, and wore the livery of the deacon-house, a long frieze coat, with the badge of the charity on the sleeve. He carried in his hand a worn-out portfolio, containing two or three volumes belonging to some circulating library.

"The master sent me a message," he said, "and desired me to call on my way, and see if your honour had come by the diligence. You will not take it ill, sir, that I did not know you?"

Now, inasmuch as the worst-tempered tyrant on the face of the earth could hardly take it ill that a man who had never seen him in his life should not recognize him at first sight, I generously pardoned the poor little man; and directing my luggage to be kept in the office till called for, I requested him to show me the way to my uncle's house.

A few days after my arrival, I strolled one morning after breakfast, with a book in my hand, through the court-yard, into the pleasant garden which lay beyond. Entering a cool leafy arbour, I seated myself on the bench, and was contemplating, in a dreamy sort of mood, the rich profusion of flowers that lay beyond, when the door into the court opened, and Old Rees appeared. As he walked slowly towards me, with the weight of nearly seventy years on his shoulders, I had time enough to perceive that something ailed him. He stumbled against the edge of the flower-border, without seeming conscious of its existence, although during many years he had been accustomed, every morning at half-past ten, to bring his master's clothes to be brushed on a tree near the arbour; he allowed my uncle's Sunday coat, which he carried over his arm, to trail on the gravel; and before he reached as a apple-tree, one of whose boughs served as a clothes-stand, he had let his brush fall twice. As he came nearer, I perceived that his cheeks were very pale, his eyes dim, and his whole bearing betokened sadness. As he passed by the arbour, instead of his usual cheerful, "A fine morning, sir," he silently took off his hat, and stumbled against the threshold. With a deep sigh, he then took off his coat, and I thought that, in his tight black vest, he looked thinner and more bent than one would even have expected from his face. The red tin snuff-box, which peeped out of the only pocket in his waistcoat, remained untouched; and with another deep sigh, he hung my uncle's